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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2006

In Today's Papers

Iraqi PM to Visit Turkey
All papers: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan speaking at a party function Sunday said that Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari is to visit Turkey Tuesday to discuss how neighbors can help defuse the sectarian violence in his country. Erdogan added that Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr is also expected to visit Turkey soon. Erdogan charged that the unrest was the result of "provocation" aimed at deepening the security crisis in Iraq. Milliyet expects Turkey to express to Jafari concerns over the military exercises held by the heavily armed Kurdish militia in northern Iraq, and the campaign launched by the PKK for the release of Abdullah Ocalan. A news commentary in Cumhuriyet claims that US has permitted the sectarian clashes in Iraq to replace the Shiites' prime minister nominee Ibrahim Jafari with the Sunni politician Iyad Allawi. Papers cite a New York Times article which said Turkey, in an effort to protect the Turkmen, may enter northern Iraq in the event of a civil war.

Columnists continued to express worry about the future of Iraq because of the ongoing sectarian violence. Washington-based Yasemin Congar focused on what US official circles are thinking. In mainstream Milliyet she elaborated on the possibility of a failure to prevent a civil war in Iraq: "the failure to prevent a civil war will bring everybody involved to a losing situation. The concern is that a civil war will not only mean sectarian war but also war between the sects. A failure to prevent civil war in Iraq will lead to the overall blame of the Bush administration, both domestically and internationally. The Republicans will likely go through a political tremor if that happens. And it goes without saying that if that happens, a predominant majority of the American people will call for the return of

the US troops."

Addressing speculations that Turkey could intervene in case of a civil war in Iraq, columnist Ferai Tinc said in her Hurriyet column entitled, "Better Watch Iran Than Turkey" that an empowered Shiite influence in Iraq has the "potential to inspire the entire region, from Jordan to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries. Southern Iraq now has the potential to create more troubles than the north, if the current conflicts move deeper into the country."

The Samarra bombings as well as situations in Iran and Palestine are all indications of the failure of the Bush administration's policy, says Kamuran Ozbir in the nationalist Ortadogu: "It is still not very clear whether Washington will give up its 'democracy missionary' role or try to establish a dialogue with fanatic leaders in hopes of converting them to a moderate position in the long run. The US seems to be in a deep quagmire."

Annan Hails Turkey's Hamas Initiative

PAPERS: United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan praised Turkey regarding the visit of Hamas officials to Ankara last week. "It was very beneficial," Annan said in his meeting with Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul in Qatar. On Sunday, Prime Minister Erdogan said that Turkey, the co-chairman of the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENAI,) had been selected for a mission that targets peace. Erdogan claimed that in time, Hamas would soften its rhetoric: "Because you cannot achieve a result if guns are not silenced," Erdogan stressed.

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UN, OIC Call for Restraint in Prophet Muhammad Cartoons Row
Hurriyet, Radikal, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others: United Nations Secretary-General, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General, the foreign ministers of Turkey, Spain, and Qatar, and Arab League chairman attended a UN-sponsored meeting to discuss the crisis over the cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in Doha this weekend. Freedom of speech should not be exploited to disseminate hatred, warned the joint declaration of the meeting in Doha, calling for restraint and dialogue to ease tensions. Annan said in the joint statement that the UN deeply regretted the offence given by the cartoons, as well as the loss of life and damage to property in several countries.

Gul to Visit Athens

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Vatan, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others: Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyiannis told To Vima that she was looking forward to the visit of Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul to Athens soon. Bakoyiannis reiterated the Greek support for Turkey's EU membership, adding that the support was not unconditional. She noted that Greek Cypriots must be given access to Turkish ports and airports by the end of 2006.

US: Trade with Northern Cyprus Not Illegal

Milliyet, Turkiye: Sunday papers report State Department Spokesman Adam Ereli as saying that "commercial transactions with the northern part of Cyprus are not illegal." Milliyet says that the US had revealed documents showing that since 2004, the US administration had taken a series of measures to encourage American companies to launch direct trade with Turkish Cyprus. The released documents say that the visit of US officials to north Cyprus would send an important signal that the US is doing all it can to help fulfill the promise of the international community to take steps to ease the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots.

Pro-PKK Protestors Clash with Police in Diyarbakir

All papers: A group of PKK supporters clashed with riot police in the mainly Kurdish southeastern province of Diyarbakir on Sunday. The group was waiting at Diyarbakir

hospital to receive the body of a PKK terrorist killed, together with six other militants, in Mardin over the weekend. After receiving the remains of the PKK member, the group began to chant slogans in favor of the PKK and its imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan, and pelted the police, shops and official buildings with stones. Ten were injured, and police detained 12 demonstrators.

Land forces Commander General Yasar Buyukanit, in Diyarbakir for inspections, pledged that Turkish security forces will continue the struggle against terrorism. Interior Minister Aksu reported to Parliament that in the past three years 246 members of the Turkish security forces were killed by terrorists and that 1325 terrorists were captured.

TV HIGHLIGHTS

NTV News (7: 00 a.m.)

Domestic News

- Prime Minister Erdogan said Turkey would fulfill its responsibilities as co-chairman of the project for alliance of civilizations and would continue to play an active role in the Middle East.

- Six terrorist PKK defectors turned themselves in to the security forces in Sirnak.

International News

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- Iran and Russia have agreed in principle Sunday to establish a joint uranium enrichment venture.

- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas warned that he will resign if Hamas does not begin peace talks with Israel.

- Greek Foreign Minister Bakoyiannis said Greece's support for Turkey's European membership "is not unconditional and terms have already been set both by us and the rest of our partners."

- Four people have been killed in an inmate uprising at a jail in Afghanistan's capital.

- 30 were killed yesterday in Iraq in rising violence following the attack on a holy Shiite shrine in Samarra.

Economy News

- Turkey is expected to become the 13th largest economy among the OECD countries in 2006.
- World Bank Turkey Director Andrew Vorkink said the floating exchange rate regime was more effective than a fixed one, and Turkey should continue it. State Minister Ali Babacan said Turkey will not abandon its free exchange regime.

WILSON